



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE
COMMISSIONER DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.

March 31, 2025

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Subject: Immediate Action Request – Border Security Measures

Dear President Trump:

I am writing to formally request immediate action involving a 20.3-acre island in Starr County, Texas, to be secured in collaboration with the Texas Military Department (TMD). The Texas General Land Office (GLO) recently received a request from TMD to confirm “Beaver Island” is indeed within U.S. territory and help determine ownership of the island. After several weeks of work, the GLO Surveying Department has been able to confidently make the following rulings: Beaver Island is U.S. territory, and ownership of the island is partly the State of Texas, and the United States. My office has submitted these findings to TMD to begin security operations which will significantly enhance border security and improve the safety of both TMD soldiers and U.S. Border Patrol Agents operating in the vicinity. These findings are enclosed in this letter.

The identified island is currently being used by cartels for smuggling operations and stash sites for weapons and other illicit activities. TMD plans to utilize engineering assets to eliminate the dense brush and vegetation on the island, which provides adequate cover for the cartels to continue their criminal enterprise.

These actions are part of the GLO’s continued efforts to assist Governor Abbott’s Operation Lone Star and our federal partners to gain complete operational control of our southern border. As Texas Land Commissioner, I recently acquired a 1,402-acre ranch along the border near Rio Grande City. In less than 24 hours after the purchase on October 23rd, 2024, I granted a 7,681-foot-long (1.45-mile) easement across the property, allowing the Texas Border Wall to be built. As of January, the installation of wall panels is complete, and the Texas Facilities Commission will have security cameras and lighting installed by May 2025.

At my direction, since serving as the head of this agency, the GLO has won several significant victories in the fight to repel cartel activities along our border. In 2023, my office was able to survey several islands in the Rio Grande River and declare them part of the State of Texas,

permitting law enforcement to end all human trafficking and drug smuggling operations on them. The largest of these islands is 170 acres, and before declaring it part of Texas, it had been used as a “no-man’s land” to evade both American and Mexican law enforcement. The island, known as “Fronton Island,” had been deemed by the TMD and Texas Department of Public Safety as the most dangerous part of the Texas border. Cartel-on-cartel violence broke out almost nightly across the river, including massive firefights with automatic weapons and grenades. The initiative to secure the island, clear it of all brush and vegetation, and install razor wire along the river was named *Operation Flat Top*. During the operation, evidence of trafficking was found, along with weapon caches and even improvised explosive devices (IEDs). *Operation Flat Top* has been a massive success, as all cartel-related activity has dropped to zero since its completion.

I am committed to using every available means at my disposal to gain complete operational control of our border. I look forward to U.S. Border Patrol working with TMD to determine the best course of action for collaboration to bring an end to the lawlessness on this section of the border. As you know, Governor Abbott has led Texas’ efforts with Operation Lone Star for many years, therefore I believe Texas can continue to provide valuable operational insight on how best to secure this land.

Thank you for considering my request. I look forward to hearing from you.

May God bless you and continue to bless the United States of America.

For Texas,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Buckingham", written in a cursive style.

DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.
Commissioner, Texas General Land Office

Enclosure



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE
COMMISSIONER DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.

March 31, 2025

Staff Sergeant Emmanuel Teran
Special Liaison to the Chief of Border Patrol Mr. Mike Banks
Texas Military Department
U.S. Border Patrol Sector Headquarters
4400 South Expressway 281
Edinburg, TX 78545

RE: Roma Island and Beaver Island, Starr County, Texas

Dear Staff Sergeant Teran:

As Texas Land Commissioner, I have made a commitment to Texans to use all means available to gain complete operational control of the southern border. Recently, your office requested to access Roma Island and Beaver Island (also known as Bowers Island) located within the Rio Grande in Starr County, Texas, to safeguard Texas communities. Maps of these two islands are enclosed for reference.

Based on the records of our agency, the Texas General Land Office (GLO) has determined that Roma Island is state-owned, and I hereby grant the Texas Military Department (TMD) permission to access, patrol, and police Roma Island, including vegetation management, provided TMD complies with all applicable state and federal regulations while doing so.

With regards to Beaver/Bowers Island, in 1976 the State of Texas granted a portion of the bed and banks of the Rio Grande in Starr and Hidalgo Counties, Texas, to the United States of America (USA) per the attached Deed. This 1976 conveyance to the USA included all the bed and banks of the Rio Grande at a portion of Beaver/Bowers Island beginning at coordinate Northing 263,940 and Easting 1,836,870, at approximately River Mile 252.4 upstream and the coordinate of Northing 264,760 Easting 1,841,700, at approximately River Mile 251.5 downstream in Starr County, TX. Accordingly, as reflected in the attached map, the USA owns a portion of Beaver/Bowers Island, and I encourage you to speak with U.S. Border Patrol directly about policing activities on that portion.

Regarding the portion of Beaver/Bowers Island not granted to the USA per the 1976 deed, based on GLO records, we have determined that portion of Beaver/Bowers Island is State-owned, and I hereby grant the Texas Military Department (TMD) permission to access, patrol, and police that

portion of Beaver/Bowers Island not owned by the USA, including vegetation management, provided TMD complies with all applicable state and federal regulations while doing so.

If you have any questions, comments, and/or concerns please feel free to contact the GLO's Deputy Director of Surveying Services, Mark Neugebauer, at (512) 475-1437 or by email at mark.neugebauer@glo.texas.gov.

Thank you for your service to the State of Texas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Buckingham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.
Commissioner, Texas General Land Office

Enclosure

c: Greg Abbott, Governor
Jennifer G. Jones, GLO Chief Clerk
Jeff Gordon, GLO General Counsel
Brian Carter, Senior Deputy, GLO Asset Enhancement
Mark J. Neugebauer, Deputy Director. GLO Surveying Services

ORIGINAL

22377

4.50
dy

DEED

THE STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF STARR
COUNTY OF HIDALGO

IN THE NAME OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, GREETINGS:

WHEREAS, J. F. Friedkin, Commissioner of the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, has made application to the Governor of the State of Texas in writing for a grant to the United States of America of a portion of the bed and banks of the Rio Grande in Starr and Hidalgo Counties, Texas, hereinafter described, under the provisions of Article 5248g-1, V.A.C.S. (Acts 1975, 64th Leg., R.S., Ch. 238, p. 584), which land is necessary and expedient to facilitate the accomplishment of projects for the relocation and rectification of the Rio Grande upstream from Hidalgo-Reynosa in Hidalgo County and other boundary adjustments approved by the government of the United States and Mexico as provided for in the Treaty to Resolve Pending Boundary Differences and Maintain the Rio Grande and Colorado River as the International Boundary Between the United States of America and the United Mexican States, which entered into force April 18, 1972 (Treaties and Other International Acts Series 7313) and the American-Mexican Boundary Treaty Act of 1972, Public Law 92-549 (86 Stat. 1161), approved October 25, 1972, which said land is more particularly described as follows, to-wit:

AT BEAVER ISLAND: All of the bed and banks of the Rio Grande between the coordinate of N 263,940; E 1,836,870, at approximately River Mile 252.4 upstream and the coordinate of N 264,760; E 1,841,700, at approximately River Mile 251.5 downstream in Starr County, Texas.

UPSTREAM - HIDALGO-REYNOSA: All of the bed and banks of the Rio Grande between the coordinate of N 162,540; E 2,065,360, at approximately River Mile 167.4 upstream and the coordinate of N 163,250; E 2,074,050, at approximately River Mile 163.2 downstream in Hidalgo County, Texas.

AT HORCON TRACT: All of the bed and banks of the Rio Grande between the coordinate of N 145,670; E 2,201,700, at approximately River Mile 117.9 upstream and the coordinate of N 144,840; E 2,204,975, at approximately River Mile 117.3 downstream in Hidalgo County, Texas.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Dolph Briscoe, Governor of the State of Texas, in the name and on behalf of the State of Texas, for and in consideration of the sum of ONE DOLLAR, and other valuable consideration, consisting of the benefits and advantages accruing to the people of the State of Texas from the relocation and rectification, boundary adjustments and preservation to be provided by said projects, do hereby grant, convey, and relinquish to the United States of America, forever, the ownership, right and title to the above described land, subject to the following reservations:

1/014

1. All minerals in, on and under that portion only of the existing channel which will remain within the territorial limits of the United States on completion of the relocation and rectification project, except rock, sand and gravel needed by the United States in the operation and construction by the United States or its agents of the works above described; provided, however, that the minerals so reserved to the State may not be explored for, developed, or produced in a manner which will at any time prevent or interfere with the operation or construction by the United States of America of any of the works above described; and provided further, that prior to exploring for or developing the reserved minerals, the written consent and approval of the United States Section, International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, or its successor agency, shall be obtained as to the proposed area sought to be explored or developed by the State of Texas, including, but not by way of limitation, the location of and production facilities for oil and/or gas wells and/or other minerals.

2. Nothing herein shall be construed as divesting, limiting or otherwise affecting the property rights, including, but not by way of limitation, the riparian rights, under the laws of the State of Texas, of private owners of land abutting the Rio Grande in Starr and Hidalgo Counties, Texas.

THIS CONVEYANCE is further subject to provisions of Article 5247, V.A.C.S., providing, in part:

No such cession [exclusive jurisdiction to the United States] shall ever be made except upon the express condition that this State shall retain concurrent jurisdiction with the United States over every portion of the land so ceded, so far, that all process, civil or criminal issuing under the authority of this State or any of the courts or judicial officers thereof, may be executed by the proper officers of the State, upon any person amenable to the same within the limits of the land so ceded, in like manner and like effect as if no such cession had taken place; and such consideration shall be inserted in such instrument of cession.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto signed my name as Governor of the State of Texas and have caused the Great Seal of the State of Texas to be hereunto affixed, at the City of Austin, Texas on this 9th day of JUNE, A.D. 1976.



ATTEST

Secretary of the State of Texas

Governor of Texas

1. All minerals in, on and under that portion only of the existing channel which will remain within the territorial limits of the United States on completion of the relocation and rectification project, except rock, sand and gravel needed by the United States in the operation and construction by the United States or its agents of the works above described; provided, however, that the minerals so reserved to the State may not be explored for, developed, or produced in a manner which will at any time prevent or interfere with the operation or construction by the United States of America of any of the works above described; and provided further, that prior to exploring for or developing the reserved minerals, the written consent and approval of the United States Section, International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, or its successor agency, shall be obtained as to the proposed area sought to be explored or developed by the State of Texas, including, but not by way of limitation, the location of and production facilities for oil and/or gas wells and/or other minerals.

2. Nothing herein shall be construed as divesting, limiting or otherwise affecting the property rights, including, but not by way of limitation, the riparian rights, under the laws of the State of Texas, of private owners of land abutting the Rio Grande in Starr and Hidalgo Counties, Texas.

THIS CONVEYANCE is further subject to provisions of Article 5247, V.A.C.S., providing, in part:

No such cession [exclusive jurisdiction to the United States] shall ever be made except upon the express condition that this State shall retain concurrent jurisdiction with the United States over every portion of the land so ceded, so far, that all process, civil or criminal issuing under the authority of this State or any of the courts or judicial officers thereof, may be executed by the proper officers of the State, upon any person amenable to the same within the limits of the land so ceded, in like manner and like effect as if no such cession had taken place; and such consideration shall be inserted in such instrument of cession.

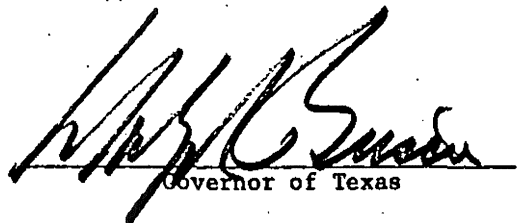
IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto signed my name as Governor of the State of Texas and have caused the Great Seal of the State of Texas to be hereunto affixed, at the City of Austin, Texas on this 9th day of JUNE, A.D. 1976.



ATTEST



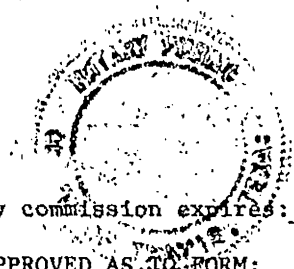
Secretary of the State of Texas


Governor of Texas

STATE OF TEXAS }
COUNTY OF TRAVIS }

Before me, the undersigned authority, a Notary Public in and for the County of Travis, State of Texas, on this day personally appeared Dolph Briscoe, Governor of the State of Texas, known to me to be the person and officer whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that he executed the same for the purpose and consideration therein expressed and in the capacity therein stated.

Given under my hand and seal of office on this 9th day of JUNE, 1976.



Gloria Turner
Notary Public, Travis County, Texas

My commission expires: January, 1977

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

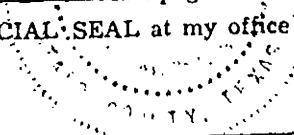
John L. Hill
Attorney General of Texas

J. Milton Richardson
Assistant Attorney General

THE STATE OF TEXAS }
COUNTY OF STARR }

I, Jose S. Hinojosa, County Clerk in and for said County, do hereby certify the foregoing instrument dated the 9th day of June, A. D. 1976, together with the certificates of authentication, was filed for record in my office the 16 day of July, A. D. 1976, at 1:05 o'clock P.M., and duly recorded on the 26th day of July, A. D. 1976, at 8:40 o'clock P.M., in Deed records of Starr County, in volume "396" page 622/24

WITNESS MY HAND AND OFFICIAL SEAL at my office in Rio Grande City, Texas, the date last above written.



JOSE S. HINOJOSA

County Clerk, Starr County, Texas

By Debra J. Millard Deputy

22377

91488

PROOF READ

Copy to:

International Boundary & Water Commission at 1:05 o'clock P M

208 S. J Street

Arlington, Texas 78550

attn: Super Heiner

FILED FOR RECORD

JUL 16 1976

JOSE S. HINOJOSA
COUNTY CLERK, STARR COUNTY
by *[Signature]* Deputy

(encl call)



Starr County

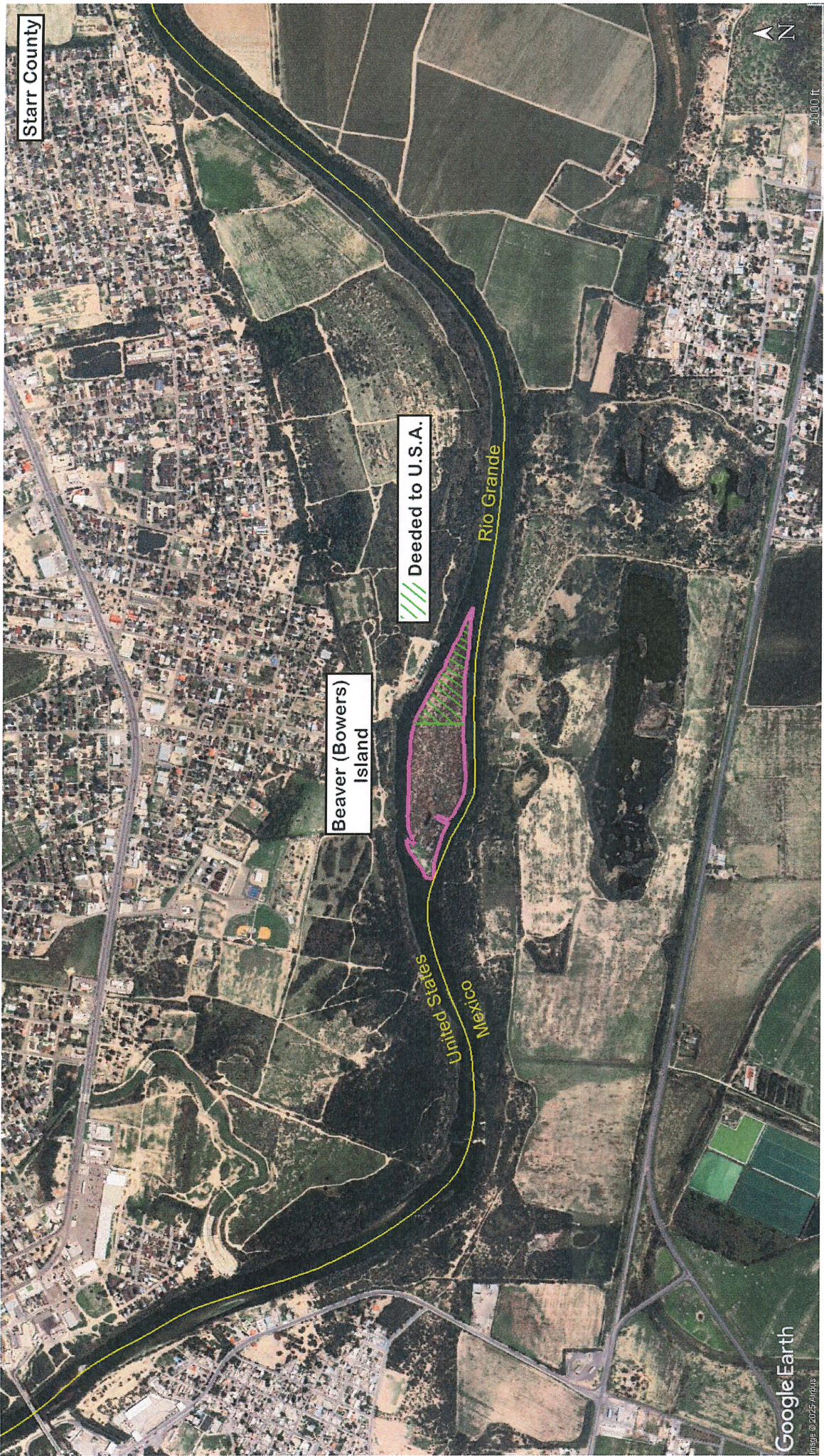
Roma Islands

Rio Grande

United States
Mexico

2000 ft

Google Earth
Images © 2005-2010



Starr County

Beaver (Bowers)
Island

Deeded to U.S.A.

Rio Grande

United States
Mexico



2000 ft

Google Earth

Image © 2025 Airphoto